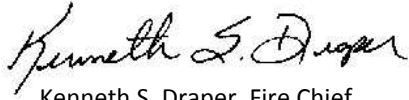
	<b>MARTINSVILLE FIRE &amp; EMS</b> Standard Administrative Guideline	
	<b>SAG NUMBER:</b>	100.025
	<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Apparatus Driving Guidelines
	<b>REVISION DATE:</b>	Not Applicable
	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	August 19, 2008
	<b>SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL:</b>	 Kenneth S. Draper, Fire Chief

## I. Purpose:

All department personnel, from chief officers to probationary firefighters, need to recognize the fact that emergency apparatus response is the basis for the success or failure of all other emergency functions. These expensive vehicles carry all of the portable equipment, in addition to all of the personnel of the department. Without the safe response of our emergency vehicles to the incident scene, the department cannot achieve its mission of saving lives and protecting property. Having sound emergency apparatus response guidelines in place will assist the department in providing direction to its personnel.

Responding to any emergency call, the Martinsville Fire & EMS Department places a great deal of responsibility on the driver/operators of our emergency vehicles. Not only must emergency vehicle drivers provide prompt response of the apparatus, equipment, and personnel to provide services to those in need, but most importantly they must accomplish this task in the safest and most prudent manner possible. Emergency vehicle drivers have in their care, custody and control most of the major assets possessed by this organization (the apparatus, portable equipment, and most importantly our personnel). Emergency apparatus driver/operators also have a higher standard of care to provide to the general motoring public and must make every attempt possible to provide due regard for the safety of others. Drivers must constantly monitor and reduce the amount of risk and exposure to potential losses during each and every response. Safe arrival at the emergency scene shall be, and must always remain, the first priority of all emergency vehicle drivers. In order to accomplish this enormous task, all emergency vehicle driver/operators shall become familiar with, and constantly abide by the following guidelines.

## II. Scope:

This guideline applies to all personnel whom have a responsibility to drive/operate any emergency vehicle within the department.

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### III. Responsibility:

All department personnel are responsible for the guidelines contained in this SAG. Company officers must monitor vehicle driver/operators to ensure compliance with the guidelines of the SAG. Ultimately, the Fire Chief, and/or his appointee, shall be responsible for enforcement of this SAG.

### IV. Guideline:

#### A. Circle of Safety

- 1) Prior to entering the cab and starting the apparatus, the emergency vehicle driver shall make a circle of safety around the vehicle to see that all equipment is secured, that all compartment doors are securely closed, and any physical obstructions are moved out of the way. During the circle of safety the emergency vehicle driver shall encircle the vehicle and visually inspect all four sides and the top of the vehicle before entering the cab. The emergency vehicle driver should also verify right side and rear clearance with the person riding in the officer position. This procedure shall be conducted prior to moving the vehicle regardless of whether or not the vehicle is about to leave on an emergency or non-emergency call.

#### B. Warning Devices and True Emergencies

- 1) When responding to a true emergency<sup>1</sup>, all audible and visual warning devices will be operated at all times regardless of the time of day and/or traffic conditions. All emergency vehicle drivers must understand that warning devices are not always effective in making other vehicle operators aware of your presence. Warning devices only request the right-of-way, they do not insure the right-of-way.

<sup>1</sup> The definition of a true emergency is a situation in which there is a high probability of death or serious illness/injury to an individual or significant property loss, and actions by an emergency vehicle driver may reduce the seriousness of the situation.

#### C. Apparatus Control and Right-of-Way

- 1) All drivers shall attempt to maintain control of the vehicle that they are operating in such a manner as to provide the maximum level of safety for both their passengers and the general public. Emergency vehicle drivers should be aware that civilian vehicle operators might not react in the manner in which is expected or felt to be appropriate. An attempt should be made to have options available when passing or overtaking vehicles. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot force the right-of-way, nor can they assume the right-of-way, therefore you do not have the right-of-way until the other vehicle yields to you.

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- 2) The emergency vehicle driver shall be aware of their rate of closure on other vehicles and pedestrians at all times to make sure that a safe following distance is established and maintained. All drivers shall follow the rule for safe following distance and allow 1 second of following distance for every 10 feet of vehicle length for speeds under 40 mph, and add 1 additional second for each 10 mph for speeds over 40 mph.

**D. Response Speeds**

- 1) When responding to an emergency call, drivers should operate the vehicle they are driving as close to the posted speed limit as possible, conditions permitting. Examples of conditions requiring slower response speeds include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Slippery road conditions
  - b. Inclement weather
  - c. Poor visibility
  - d. Heavy or congested traffic conditions
  - e. Pedestrian traffic
  - f. Sharp curves
  - g. Time of day (school bus routes, factory shift change times, etc.)

**E. Intersection Practices**

- 1) Extreme care should be taken when approaching any intersection, as intersections are the locations responsible for a large percentage of major accidents involving emergency vehicles. Drivers are required to practice the department's intersection operating guidelines during all emergency responses.
- 2) Uncontrolled Intersections:
  - a. Any intersection that does not offer a control device (i.e., stop sign, yield sign or traffic signal) in the direction of travel of the emergency vehicle or where a traffic control signal is green upon approach of the emergency vehicle, all emergency vehicle drivers should do the following:
    - o Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.). Observe traffic in all four directions (left, right, front and rear).
    - o Slow down if any potential hazards are detected and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot.
    - o Change the siren cadence not less than 200' from the intersection.
    - o Avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.

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- Emergency vehicle drivers should always be prepared to stop. If another vehicle operator fails to yield the right-of-way to an emergency vehicle, the emergency vehicle driver cannot force the right-of-way, nor can you assume the right-of-way, and therefore you do not have the right-of-way until the other vehicle yields to you.

### 3) Controlled Intersections:

- a. Any intersection controlled by a stop sign, yield sign, yellow or red traffic light requires a complete stop by the emergency vehicle driver. In addition to bringing the vehicle to a complete stop, these additional steps must be followed as well:
  - Do not rely on warning devices to clear traffic.
  - Scan the intersection for possible hazards (right turns on red, pedestrians, vehicles traveling fast, etc.) as well as driver options.
  - Begin to slow down well before reaching the intersection and cover the brake pedal with the driver's foot, continue to scan in four directions (left, right, front and rear).
  - Change the siren cadence not less than 200' from the intersection.
  - Scan intersections for possible passing options (pass on right, left, wait, etc.) avoid using the opposing lane of traffic if at all possible.
  - Come to a complete stop.
  - Establish eye contact with other vehicle drivers; have the person riding in the officer position communicate all is clear; reconfirm all other vehicles are stopped.
  - Proceed through one lane of traffic at a time, treating each lane of traffic as a separate intersection.

### F. Non-Emergency Response

- 1) When responding to a call in a non-emergency response mode the vehicle will be operated without any audible or visual warning devices and in compliance with all state motor vehicle laws that apply to civilian traffic. At no time should any emergency vehicle be operated during a response with only visual warning devices.

### G. Ordinary Travel Procedures

- 1) All drivers shall obey all traffic laws and traffic control devices when driving any Fire & EMS Department vehicle under ordinary travel conditions. Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or driving any vehicle in an aggressive manner will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including termination of employment (as outlined the City of Martinsville Employee Manual).

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#### H. Riding Policy

- 1) The department requires all persons riding on apparatus to be seated in approved riding positions and be secured to the vehicle by seatbelts whenever the vehicle is in motion. The emergency vehicle driver shall verify that all personnel are properly seated and in seatbelts before the vehicle is moved. The department prohibits the riding on tailsteps, sidesteps, running boards, or any other exposed position. Personnel who perform emergency medical care while the vehicle is in motion should be secured to the vehicle by a seatbelt or safety harness designed for occupant restraint when possible (i.e., not performing direct patient care).

#### I. Backing

- 1) The department recognizes that backing emergency vehicles is made hazardous by the fact that the driver cannot see much of where they intend to go. The department recommends that whenever possible drivers should avoid backing, as the safest way to back up a vehicle is not to back up at all. When it is necessary to back-up any department vehicle, drivers shall follow one of the two following measures:
  - a. The first choice of backing procedures is that before any vehicle is put into reverse, a spotter be put in place near the rear of the vehicle. The spotter should be positioned so that the emergency vehicle driver can see them at all times. If at any time the emergency vehicle driver loses sight of the spotter, he/she shall stop immediately until the spotter makes himself/herself visible again.
  - b. If conditions exist that make the use of spotters impossible, all drivers (before attempting to back-up any emergency vehicle) shall make a circle of safety to see that; no person(s) are directly behind the vehicle or in its intended path of travel; all equipment is secured and that all compartment doors are securely closed; and any physical obstructions are moved out of the way. The emergency vehicle driver should also note all potential obstructions in the intended path of travel.
- 2) While backing any department vehicle, the vehicle's speed shall be reduced and controlled in such a manner to allow sufficient time for the vehicle to stop if an imminent danger arises. Backing department apparatus at excessive speeds will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

#### J. Response in Privately Owned vehicles

- 1) Should any department personnel respond to the station or to the scene of an emergency in his / her private vehicle, those personnel must strictly adhere to all applicable motor vehicle laws. Privately owned vehicles are not provided with the same exemptions that are provided to emergency vehicles. No personnel within the department will be permitted to violate any motor vehicle laws, including, but not limited to:

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- a. Speed limits
- b. Going through traffic control devices
- c. Passing in an unsafe manner

- 2) While it is recognized that timeliness in response to an emergency is important, it is imperative that all drivers understand that their private vehicles are not emergency vehicles and therefore are not afforded any exemptions or special privileges under state law.

K. Enforcement

- 1) Any driver observed breaking any traffic laws or operating any vehicle in an aggressive manner will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including termination of employment (as outlined the City of Martinsville Employee Manual).
- 2) It shall be the duty of the shift officer or ranking officer to monitor the operations of department apparatus. A department officer shall intervene when driving safety has been jeopardized.